



NERC CDT in Oil and Gas: Training Committee Meeting Agenda

**Monday January 30th 2017- 12pm
Seminar Room
Enterprise Oil Building, Heriot-Watt University**

Attendees:

Andy Aplin (Durham University)
Andy Bell (Shell)
Anna Clark (NERC CDT in Oil & Gas)
Lorna Morrow (NERC CDT in Oil & Gas)
John Underhill (NERC CDT in Oil & Gas)

Joined Remotely:

Kate Gormley (Heriot-Watt University)
Zoe Shipton (University of Strathclyde)
Mads Huuse (University of Manchester)

Apologies from:

Ole Jacob Martinsen (Statoil)
Tony Doré (Statoil)
Anna Korre (Imperial College London)

1. John Underhill gave a brief welcome to all attendees, providing necessary HSE information prior to handing over to Andy Aplin for an overview of the meeting objectives.

2. Andy Aplin & Anna Clark reviewed the minutes from the last meeting. The points of note have been arranged

Anna Clark is to compile a full list of Learning Outcomes for the Training Academy programme.

3. Current training provision

The Introduction to Geology day was removed for the 2016 cohort due to the very small number of cohort members from a non-geology academic background. Difficulties in providing an engaging curriculum for non-geologists were raised.

It was decided that the Wessex Basin course field & classroom format should be retained in 2017, despite some problems surrounding student engagement in 2016. Anna Clark is to work with Al Fraser & Howard Johnson in developing a workbook that students must add to each day and hand in completed by the end of the course. It is vital that the course includes material on the topic of the social licence to operate using Wych Farm as a case study.

Southampton will run the Subsea Hazard course each September for subsequent cohorts.

Decarbonisation course - the tutor for the 2016 Decarbonisation course is unable to teach the course due to ill health. A plea was made for assistance in sourcing alternative teaching staff, ideally with one or two people to take on each 'daily subject' in the five day course. ZS offered to send the proposed timetable of topics to her staff as she hoped it would be possible to find people willing to give a half-day lecture as field visits have been secured for most of the days. ZS also suggested the ClimateXchange organisation and a visit to the power distribution centre at Glasgow airport which postdocs would be able to run. AA suggested that Jon Gluyas could cover the CCS topic.

Environmental Science offerings -Anna Clark is to meet with Kate Gormley and other Aberdeen University staff in order to discuss a course examining the environmental impact of decommissioning, concurrent with the set-up of a Decommissioning MSc in Aberdeen. Contact person for Hydrology/Environmental Engineering is Graham Paton. ZS suggested Anna Marie at Strathclyde for social impact assessment.

New field courses - Anna Clark is to progress the set up new courses on CCS and Reservoir Modelling for 2018.

Anna Clark to investigate options for a UK-based event for the 2014 cohort around March to May 2018. Hiring a large house and holding an event there was discussed as an option. Academic focus is to be upon skills required for writing up, viva and early career success.

Compatibility of internships with 4 year PhD completion rule was discussed. Currently some CDT partners do not allow an extension beyond 4 years regardless of circumstances. It was agreed that with CDT PhDs being 4 years in length under normal circumstances, universities should be able to consider a further year's extension to provide parity with the standard 3 year PhD studentship. Incompatibility with Athena Swan guidelines was also cited as another reason for granting year's PhD extension. In response to a query from MH, LM confirmed that she had corresponded with Kevin Taylor regarding NERC's positive response to the opportunity for internships and that extensions of study for this reason would not adversely affect the performance metrics of the grant. A full guidance statement on internships is available on the CDT Members' Area.

It was agreed that two internships should be allowed, with more than two being deemed excessive, and members were reminded that a total period for all internships is set in the guidance above as 4 months.

AA agreed to re-connect with Total regarding CDT access to their course portfolio to find out whether the company is offering spare places on a range of courses to CDT students, or prefers to provide one course for a CDT cohort to attend.

Members agreed that Geophysics provision should be included in the CDT programme and AA agreed to contact Peter Styles and Callum Macdonald (who has recently left Shell).

Members responded to student feedback to ask if the Geoinformatics training could be moved to earlier in the programme.

The LIDAR /Elgin course led by John Howell should still be included in the training

4. Report on finances (LM)

LM reported that based on the current committed subscriptions from industry partners, the actual costs of courses already run and default costings for future courses and students paying for their travel to and from TA training venues from their RTSG allowances, the TA budget is currently showing a surplus of @£130k in 2021. If, as requested by the Management Board, students' travel expenses are to be included, LM estimates that the budget would be in deficit by @£140k by 2021.

The vast majority of presenters to date have not even charged for their travel and subsistence let alone a day rate for their time. However, there was an increase in 2016 in the number of presenters claiming expenses and it should be expected that as multiple student cohorts progress through the CDT Training Academy programme, teaching staff may increasingly require recompense for their time and materials. This cost was not specifically included in the original funding model for the training programme which is based on a default amount of £100 per student per day.

Course Expenditure - it is agreed that optional courses with insufficient student numbers should not go ahead due to the additional expenditure required to run them, and should instead be postponed one year, in order to be available for a larger pool of students to select. e.g. Co. Clare fieldtrip. Mads Huuse offered assistance from Manchester University staff for this course in future as the availability of teaching staff for it is at present uncertain.

Accessing mailing lists (e.g. TSG, BRSG) to advertise paid places on CDT optional courses was discussed as a means of getting sufficient numbers to make all courses worth running. Spare places are already advertised via the administrators of other NERC-funded CDT/DTPs or to non-CDT students at CDT partner universities at a rate of marginal costings but this involves considerable additional administration. It was agreed that the current process would be continued with spare places only being advertised on CDT courses that are already running with sufficient numbers of CDT students but where cancellations result in places being available.

The issue of paying for tutor time and expenses in future was raised. It should be expected that as multiple cohorts of students progress through the CDT Training Academy programme that teaching staff will require recompense for their time and materials. This cost has not featured in budgeting previously, but should be considering going forward.

5. Student feedback (AC)

AA and JU agreed to write a gentle reminder to those who consistently do not return course feedback sheets that the training programme is provided courtesy of our subscribing industry partners who rightly expect to receive the views of the people they are paying to train, as well as their comments providing useful tips on how to amend course format and content to improve the student experience. It was suggested that students should not be given credit for a course until they returned the feedback form but this was thought to be too draconian.

ZS described an on-line reporting tool used by Strathclyde for students to record feedback and their attendance on courses which contribute to their CPD targets which AC will follow up with Campbell Booth at Strathclyde. HWU IT has advised that a 3rd party online survey provider cannot be used as this would breach the data protection rules by giving an external party access to student email addresses.

6. Course attendance (AC & LM)

- Students unable to carry out fieldwork through ill health - can they make up the field element using additional optional modules?
- CDT Training vs. other student commitments - e.g. where conferences specific to their research area clash with a mandatory course, with both always running over the same dates each year. How do we manage this?

Following a number of late cancellations for optional courses, plus the apparent tendency of a number of students to absent themselves early from courses with no notification, or with little justification, it had been agreed at the meeting in November 2016 that cancellation costs would now be charged to a student's RTSG. This had been invoked on one occasion since and the student is now attending the course. LM reminded members that not having a complete CDT training record does not prevent a student from graduating so there is little that can be done to force a reluctant student or supervisor to commit to the training programme, other than threaten the removal of NERC studentship funding for those students in the relevant cohort which again is a very blunt approach. Members agreed that more thought should be given at the time of recruitment to the type of person being accepted for a CDT project to ensure they understand the nature of the combined research and training format and the need to commit fully to both aspects. JU agreed to

highlight this in the Annual Conference and Induction presentations.

Members agreed that anyone unable to complete fieldwork for medical reasons should be able to make up this time with optional classroom courses if necessary.

AC reported that half of the CDT students had not taken up the offer of a place on their Nautilus course of choice, but that half had also not been allocated a place on their course of choice as these had been fully subscribed by paying Nautilus customers. Nautilus is sometimes unable to confirm places until a couple of weeks beforehand which may be the cause of the lower than expected uptake.

7. Course timetabling (AC)

It was agreed that there are many competing priorities with regards course timetabling, mainly tutor and accommodation availability. Where possible courses will be spread across the year, rather than being bunched.

LM was asked to email any students and their supervisors in the 2014 cohort if they have now reached their optional course allocation limit, or if that have yet to take any optional courses.

8. Student Welfare (AC & LM)

AC reported that unfortunately two members of the 2014 cohort and one from the 2015 cohort have already withdrawn permanently from their studies and there are three others currently on a temporary suspension of studies due to medical issues. LM has been trying to find comparable completion rates for PhD students across the UK but given the unique training element of these PhDs, it is difficult to determine what, if any, effect the potential disruption of the programme is having on students' workload pressures. The student cohorts do provide an additional support group which helps students appreciate that many of them are having similar experiences in pursuing their research projects.

There was a discussion on field trip safety and where insurance liability lies – is it with the university leading the trip, or with Heriot-Watt as the lead CDT partner? AC to follow this up with Heriot-Watt's legal officer, Derek Brown. Members advised that students should sign a register before boarding the field trip bus confirming they have read the relevant risk assessment plans.

9. Other Items

- Students wishing to attend mandatory courses specific to their research that are for cohorts above them e.g. Subsea Hazards 2017, a 3rd year course for the 2014 cohort. A member of the 2015 cohort has asked to attend as it is felt that it will enhance their current research potential.

Members agreed that a student could attend a mandatory course with another cohort in advance of the course being offered to their own entry cohort. LM noted that this would set a precedent which could encourage others to demand their own schedules and the Training Academy committee having to adjudicate claims that a particular course is of particular benefit to a student earlier in their programme than later.

Mentors - industry staff increasingly unable to travel to events or give up office time.

10. Date of next meeting